

Remarks/Arguments

A. Pending Claims

Claims 14-19, 22-30, and 32-36 are pending. Claims 20, 21, and 31 have been cancelled.

B. Previously Submitted Preliminary Amendment

Applicant submits that a Preliminary Amendment was mailed on June 20, 2003, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit A. As shown on the postcard (presented as Exhibit B), the Preliminary Amendment was received by the USPTO.

The Examiner indicated in a message received on Thursday, December 11, 2003 that the Preliminary Amendment did not indicate that claims 20, 21 and 31 had been cancelled without prejudice. Applicant requests that the Preliminary Amendment be entered.

C. Election/Restriction

Applicant submits that, in light of the previously submitted Preliminary Amendment mailed June 20, 2003, a restriction and an election are not required. At the Examiner's request, however, Applicant hereby elects the claims of Group II, namely claims 14-30 drawn to a method of processing a semiconductor device, without traverse. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application at a later date capturing the subject matter recited in claim 31.

D. Additional Comments

Applicant believes no fees are required with the filing of this response. If any extension of time is required, Applicant hereby requests the appropriate extension of time. If any fees have been omitted or if any fees are required, please charge those fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account Number 50-1505/5181-83401/EBM.

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Appl. Ser. No.: 10/600,945
Atty. Dkt. No.: 5181-83401

Respectfully submitted,



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